Higher Education Academic Progression Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') recognises the importance of students effectively transitioning and progressing through their studies and connecting students with appropriate assistance and support to enhance their academic performance and achieve their study goals.

(2) The University is committed to maintaining high academic standards and achieving quality outcomes for graduates, and as such will monitor the academic achievement of our students, with a focus on early intervention.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This policy sets out the principles and framework for supporting students to maintain academic progress and outlines the measures that the University will implement to assist students to improve their academic performance and achieve the requirements of their chosen course of study.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This policy applies to all domestic and international students enrolled in a Higher Education Award Course, Enabling and/or non-award course of study offered by the University.

a. For further information, international students may refer to International Students – Monitoring Course Progression Procedure.

(5) This policy does not apply to:

a. International students enrolled in a Vocational Education and Training course. These students will have their academic progression monitored under the International Students - VET Course Progression Procedure.
b. Higher Degree by Research students. These students will have their academic progression monitored under the Higher Degree by Research - Progression Procedure.

(6) This policy outlines the minimum requirements for monitoring student engagement.

Section 4 - Policy

(7) The University is committed to fostering an education environment where every student can succeed regardless of their social, cultural, or educational background.

(8) The University acknowledges that academic performance may vary over time and is committed to ensuring students are provided with the right tools, support, and connections to help them realise their potential. With the right support, every student can become a self-directed learner and the University aims to achieve this by providing:

a. early intervention, so that students experiencing difficulty or challenges that may affect their studies can be

supported and equipped to achieve academic progress;

b. continuous monitoring of students' academic progress, and where appropriate attendance, and connecting students with relevant learning and support services and opportunities to enhance their academic skills at no extra cost to them; and
c. clear and timely advice where there are concerns regarding a student's academic performance and/or risks to them completing their studies, and the impacts such circumstances may have on their enrolment.

(9) Students are accountable for their own academic performance and have a responsibility to:

a. manage their study loads appropriately, prepare for and attend classes, and commit to studying for the recommended time periods each week;
b. seek assistance in a timely manner and engage with support services and advice offered by the University; and
c. comply with relevant university policies, procedures, and award requirements.

(10) University staff will monitor student progress and foster student success through:

a. timely and informed feedback on learning and assessment items so that students understand how they can improve their academic performance and study habits;
b. identifying and contacting students who may not be engaging in their studies and are seen to be at risk of not achieving satisfactory academic progress;
c. supporting students in their learning journey and being available to students who seek additional guidance and advice regarding their academic performance and circumstances; and
d. providing enrolment or assessment flexibility where life gets in the way.

Student support services

(11) The University acknowledges that some students may find the transition to their studies or courses at CDU challenging, and that students may experience circumstances that can impact on their ability to progress effectively.

(12) Students are encouraged to actively seek advice and support (online and/or in-person)regarding any challenges or difficulties that they may be experiencing at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate support, guidance, and services can be put in place.

(13) Student support is available through the Life and wellbeing | Charles Darwin University (cdu.edu.au) site and may include:

a. First Nations Student Support;
b. Language and Learning Support;
c. targeted academic skills training or tutoring;
d. Access and Inclusion support to develop a Learning Access Plan;
e. program or career advice;
f. free counseling support.

Monitoring and early intervention

(14) To support students, Lecturers and Course Coordinators, or equivalent, will monitor the engagement of students, through indicators such as:

a. class attendance (online and/or in-person),
b. not logging onto LearnLine within the first two (2) weeks of the study period,

c. failure to participate in, or failure of, their first assessment item,
d. course withdrawal.

(15) Monitoring will enable early intervention including the provision of advice, support, and the referral to student support services in a timely manner.

a. International students on a student visa at risk of not meeting course attendance requirements will be identified, notified, and offered support where required.
b. Domestic students may be identified as non-genuine which means they may lose their Commonwealth supported place.

Formal review of academic progress

(16) The University will monitor and formally review students' academic progress at the end of the following review periods:

a. Review period 1 – includes students who will have their final grades for a unit released in the first half of the year (which is normally between 1 January and 1 July).
a. Review period 2 – includes students who will have their final grades for a unit released in the second half of the year (which is normally between 2 July and 31 December).

(17) The University will assess students at the end of each review period, and determine whether they:

a. have made satisfactory academic progress;
b. are at risk of unsatisfactory progress; or
c. have made unsatisfactory progress.

Satisfactory academic progress

(18) A student is considered to have made satisfactory academic progress where:

a. they have passed 50% or more of the units in which they are enrolled; and
b. have passed a previously failed unit on a subsequent attempt; or
c. they have passed all simulation blocks, placement or capstone units.

(19) Students not meeting the criteria for satisfactory academic progress, will be assessed as being at risk of unsatisfactory progress or as having made unsatisfactory progress, as appropriate.

(20) If, despite making satisfactory progress, a student has also recorded a fail grade, they will be connected with relevant support services, such as:

a. Language and Learning Support or First Nations Student Support;
b. targeted academic skills training or tutoring;
c. Access and Inclusion for a Learning Access Plan;
d. program or career advice; and
e. free counseling support to assist with personal issues that may be impacting with their studies.

At risk of unsatisfactory progress

(21) A student will be deemed as at risk of unsatisfactory academic progress where they have:

a. failed the same unit or a previous version of the same unit twice; and/or
b. received fail grades in more than 50% of units attempted; and/or
c. failed a simulation block, placement or capstone unit.

(22) Students will be encouraged to attend a meeting with their Course Coordinator, or equivalent, before the Census Date of the following semester to discuss their academic progress and collaboratively develop strategies to improve their performance for the following study period.

a. A meeting with the Course Coordinator, or equivalent, for targeted feedback and learning support will be compulsory for those students who have failed simulation blocks, placement or capstone units.

(23) Strategies to improve academic performance may include, but are not limited to:

a. referral to specialist support services i.e., Language and Learning Support;
b. reduction of the number of units studied in the following period;
c. development of a study plan, including limiting unit choice, for the following period; and/or
d. other interventions as appropriate.

(24) Students will be responsible for implementing the suggested intervention strategies and assistance, noting that further fail grades may have a more severe impact on their enrolment, including loss of funding or exclusion from the course.

Unsatisfactory progress

(25) Students are assessed as having made unsatisfactory progress where:

a. they have met the criteria for being at risk of unsatisfactory performance for two or more consecutive periods; and/or
b. they have failed a unit for the third or more time; and/or
c. they have failed a simulation block, placement or capstone unit for the second time or more; and/or
d. they have previously been identified as having made unsatisfactory progress in the previous review period and have failed to meet a condition of enrolment (see enrolment conditions 29a).

(26) Students who have made unsatisfactory progress will be notified in writing and given an opportunity to provide reasons why they should be permitted to continue with their studies.

a. Students will be provided a deadline to respond that enables the process to be completed and students to continue with their studies.
b. Extensions to deadlines to respond will only be granted where the student can demonstrate special circumstances that prevented them from responding by the due date.
c. Where an extension is refused, a review process is available as a final outcome.

(27) Students are encouraged to enrol or remain enrolled in the following teaching period, acknowledging that their enrolment will be conditional on the University's acceptance of their response.

(28) The relevant Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor will review the student's unsatisfactory progress, giving consideration to:

a. their past academic performance;
b. overall study load;
c. the stage in their course;

d. prior engagement with university support services;
e. adherence to the agreed strategies to improve academic performance; and
f. the reasons provided by the student.

(29) The student will be notified in writing within ten (10) working days of the Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor's decision, which may include one or more of the following:

a. conditional enrolment in their course of study under a Learning Management Plan, which may stipulate one or more of the following conditions:
    i. prescribed units of study;
    ii. reduction in unit load;
    iii. meeting with the Course Coordinator, or equivalent, for further feedback and learning support;
    iv. consultation with an Academic Language and Learning Support Program Advisor;
    v. careers counselling;
    vi. restriction from enrolling in a specific unit for a period of six (6) or twelve (12) months; and/or
    vii. other appropriate intervention strategies, including an intermission or approved break from study.
b. offer a transfer to an alternate course of study at the same or lower level; or
c. exclusion from the course for a period of six (6) or twelve (12) months.

Exclusion

(30) Where the Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor decides to exclude a student from their course, the student will be issued with an Intent to Exclude Notice, advising the student of:

a. the duration of the exclusion;
b. the rationale for the decision;
c. the University’s obligation to report the student’s exclusion to the relevant government authority and to seek advice regarding impacts to their student visa (applicable to student visa holders only); and
d. their option to seek an appeal of the decision.

(31) Students will have their enrolment suspended twenty (20) working days following the issue of the Intent to Exclude Notice, unless a formal appeal is lodged.

a. Cancellation of a student’s enrolment and reporting to the relevant Government department will not take place until the expiry of the twenty (20) working day appeal period, or if an appeal is lodged, until after the appeal has been finalised, unless the student's health or wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others, is likely to be at risk.

(32) During a period of exclusion:

a. a student cannot enrol or transfer to a course at the same or a higher level unless they already hold a place in another course.
b. a student may apply for an Alternate Exit award if it exists and if their completed unit enrolments satisfy the requirements of such an award.

Returning to a course after exclusion

(33) A student who wishes to re-enrol into a course after a period of exclusion must engage with the Student Retention and Progression team. The team will discuss with students, preparation options to successfully reengage with their studies including:

a. referring to student support services; and/or
b. referring to the Course Coordinator, or equivalent, for academic advice.

(34) A student who is excluded, who re-enrols in the same course, or a similar course, within 5 years of their exclusion will be given the status of being 'at risk of unsatisfactory progress'.

(35) Students will be re-enrolled into the current version of the course, considering that their previous version of the course may not be available. Where possible, credit will be transferred to the current course enrolment.

Appeal

(36) A student can lodge an appeal in writing (or another accessible format) with the Student Policy and Complaints team within twenty (20) working days of receiving the Intent to Exclude notice.

a. Late appeals will be accepted where there are exceptional circumstances that prevented timely lodging of an appeal.
b. Students will not be eligible for internal course transfer during the appeal period.
c. A student who appeals the Intent to Exclude Notice will remain enrolled and continue to progress in their course of study until the appeal is finalised. Students should be aware that in the event their appeal is unsuccessful, the exclusion will take effect from the time the decision is made.

(37) An appeal will only be accepted where one or more of the following conditions have been met:

a. The process was not followed correctly, or failed to provide procedural fairness;
b. Additional information or evidence is available now, but was not reasonably available at the time of the unsatisfactory progress response; or
c. The decision was manifestly unjust.

(38) The Student Policy and Complaints team will acknowledge receipt of an appeal within two (2) working days.

(39) Appeals will be assessed by the Student Policy and Complaints team.

a. Students may be asked to clarify the appeal, provide a detailed statement, or provide additional evidence. Information may also be requested from other relevant parties.

(40) The Student Policy and Complaints team will either:

a. Refer the appeal to the next meeting of the Student Appeals Committee; or
b. Reject the appeal based on it failing to meet the conditions of an appeal.

(41) The Student Appeals Committee may request to meet with the appellant and with other parties to the appeal, including the Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor. They may also request or access additional information. The Committee will then decide on the appeal outcome based on the evidence to hand. Where there is conflicting evidence, they may make a determination based on the balance of probabilities.

(42) Students will usually be provided with a written outcome within twenty (20) working days of the appeal submission, including details of the basis of any decisions.

a. Where a student's appeal is upheld, the Student Retention and Progression Team will re-activate the progression process for the student.
b. Where a student's appeal is not upheld, the exclusion will take effect from the time the decision is made.

i. In the case of an International student, the University will notify the relevant government authority of the changes to the student's enrolment status.

(43) The Student Policy and Complaints team will monitor the progress of all appeals and keep students informed about their progress, taking into consideration student visa requirements.

a. An appeal resolution can be delayed due to the complexity or serious nature of the matter, or because parties to the appeal are temporarily unavailable, or because there is a time lag in accessing relevant information. Where such a delay occurs, the student will be informed of a revised timeframe.

External avenue for appeal

(44) The outcome of an appeal is final and there are no further avenues of recourse within the University.

(45) Where a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of an appeal, they may refer the matter to an appropriate external organisation, usually (but not limited to) the Ombudsman NT.

a. Students may choose to take their appeal to other regulatory or statutory authorities, guided by their stated scope of power or jurisdiction.

Record management

(46) Records will be kept and maintained in in accordance with the Records and Information Management Policy and Procedure and the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

(47) Confidential records relating to student progress communications, student responses and outcomes will be retained on the student's file.

(48) Records will be disposed of according to the relevant University Retention and Disposal Schedules.

Reporting

(49) The Student Retention and Progression Team will aggregate data to monitor, review and report on academic progression to relevant management and governance committees to identify common themes, trends and drive improvements. Reporting will occur on a regular cycle, and every effort will be made not to disclose any details that could identify individual students.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(50) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct – Staff or the Code of Conduct – Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2022 and the Code of Conduct – Students.

(51) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Code of Conduct – Staff and Code of Conduct - Students.

(52) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	21st November 2022
Review Date	20th November 2025
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	21st September 2022
Expiry Date	31st October 2024
Responsible Executive	Sarah Fletcher Director Student Engagement
Implementation Officer	Rachel Chamberlain Associate Director Transition and Retention 08 8946 7232
Enquiries Contact	Rachel Chamberlain Associate Director Transition and Retention 08 8946 7232

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Census Date" - The last date for students to withdraw from enrolled units without academic or financial penalty, apply for a leave of absence, or change their citizenship status or contribution payment option.

"Course Coordinator" - An academic staff member who is responsible for the academic management of a course.